

Visibility of old bodies in journalism - Shari Adlung

Abstract

Age images are changing and journalism as the most important signifying system of modernity plays a key role in this negotiation process. Since journalism as a special, institutionalized discursive authority not only depicts phenomena, but at the same time produces them, the question of visibility politics of old bodies is particularly urgent here. We can assume that some iconic old people are highly represented in journalistic discourse. However, other old bodies and age-related topics are clearly underrepresented.

Therefore my thesis asks the following questions: *Which old bodies are made (un)visible in journalism and how? When does positive visibility take place?*

In addition to my theoretical explanations, I examine the visibility or invisibility of ageing bodies in journalistic discourse in three case studies. First, I look at the discourse on the German "Flexi-Rente". Second, I analyze the discourse on care in old age. Third, I look at gendered images of old age and analyze the reporting of the French presidential wife Brigitte Macron, who is 25 years older than her husband Emmanuel Macron.

The work can show that the intersectional entanglement of body, class and gender creates different visibilities. While a positive (glorifying) visibility is possible for individual age icons (Brigitte Macron), which fits neoliberal standards, old care-dependent bodies are dehumanized or remain invisible. The neoliberal transformation of old age is only questioned at a few points in the discourse.